167. Certain General needs of Travancore.

MR. P. M. RAMAN PILLAI (*Municipal Council, Kuzhithura*) said that the need for reforming the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly was urged in a memorial submitted by the members of the 25th session of the Assembly. It was derogatory to the dignity of the Assembly that its members should stand as mere petitioners before the Dewan. The Assembly should be invested with executive responsibility.

The strength of the electorate for the Assembly, based on a high property qualification, was not adequate. Only those who paid an annual tax of Rs. 50 were entitled to vote. Owing to the low economic condition of the people and the individual partition of properties among the Nairs, Ezhavas and Vellalas, as a result of new laws, the voting ratio was extremely small in proportion to the population. The electorate should be enlarged by lowering the franchise.

A Mutual Benefit Fund or Provident Fund should be organised for the teachers of Vernacular Schools. Those teachers retired on a pension of Rs. 7 per mensem. As the purchasing value of money had fallen, the poor teachers had a hard lot to bear. The lot of the teachers in grant-in-aid schools was even worse. Government would not be obliged to spend money for the Mutual Benefit Scheme; a sympathetic supervision would alone be necessary. Over ten thousand families would be benefited by the scheme. There was a similar arrangement in the Excise Department.

There was great need for recruiting teachers into the departmental schools from private schools. The Managers of private schools paid only poor salaries to teachers, though their qualifications were the same as those of the teachers in the employ of Government. Some of the efficient Headmasters of departmental schools were recruited from private schools.

Government should adopt a more sympathetic attitude towards the Rockefeller scheme inaugurated by Dr. Jacocks. The scheme should be brought into force in every part of the country.

The Public Works Department should be bifurcated into (i) Public Works Department (proper) and (ii) the Irrigation Department. The newly formed Irrigation department should be placed under the control of a separate officer—preferably an Indian. The officers in charge of irrigation works did not utilise the entire amounts provided in the budgets. The works thus dragged on from year to year.

Toll-gates should be abolished. The drivers of bullock-carts were often annoyed and harassed by toll-gate contractors.

The Village Panchayat Regulation should be speedily brought into force.

An agricultural school and an experimental farm should be opened in south Travancore—preferably at Vilavankode.

South Travancoreans were not adequately represented in public service. Some South Travancorean officers were not given their due

promotions, *e. g.* Dr. Raman Tampi and Mr. R. Krishna Pillai. Dr. Russell Solomon was a distinguished South Travancorean, who was unemployed. He should be provided with a suitable appointment.

An opportunity should be given to the members of the Assembly for discussing with the heads of departments the subjects represented in the Assembly and final orders should be passed by Government only after the discussion.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. Raman Pillai, according to the printed list of the subjects of your representation, your first point is that there should be a separate officer in charge of the irrigation branch of the Public Works Department. That is one of the matters which has been referred to the Irrigation Committee; and upon the Committee's report, that will be considered.

As regards the second point, *viz.*, the opening of an agricultural school and experimental farm in South Travancore, that will be considered.

Your third point is Dr. Jacocks' scheme. Your representation discloses a somewhat serious misconception, and that is, that the Government have no sympathy with the object with which the Rockefeller Foundation have sent one of their representatives here.

MEMBER: I did not say that the Government had no sympathy. My point is that they have not got *sufficient* sympathy.

DEWAN: You say that what you meant was that Government have not got *sufficient* sympathy with the object of the Foundation. I may tell you that the object of the Foundation being the advancement of the health of the people of Travancore, it is certainly more dear to the Travancore Government than even to the Rockefeller Foundation. But what is done when the scheme is placed before Government is to examine it, to consider how far it would suit the conditions in Travancore and how far it could be utilised, having regard to the finances of the State. Subject to these conditions, Government will always be prepared to do whatever they can for the advancement of the health of the people which is very dear to Travancore, its people as well as its Government.

As regards the introduction of a Mutual Benefit Fund for teachers, the matter is under the consideration of the Director of Public Instruction, and Government will take it up and pass orders on it when it comes up before them.

Your fifth point is the recruitment of teachers to departmental schools from private schools. As a matter of fact—I believe in reply to some other representation it has been stated—even now teachers are being recruited to departmental schools from private schools, and there is almost a definite policy that a certain percentage of recruitment of teachers should be from private schools.

Your next point is the abolition of toll-gates. That is a vexed question which, as I said, is engaging the attention of Government. Your suggestion that at least bullock-carts may be exempted from the payment of tolls will be considered.

As to the working of the Village Panchayat Regulation, I have already said that Government have under consideration the draft rules under that Regulation.

Your ninth subject is one that has frightened me a bit. Even as it is, in the matter of appointments to Government service, we have conflicting claims of different communities. I never thought that the different parts of Travancore would also come forward as conflicting claimants in the matter of appointments to Government service. It never struck me that South Travancore would complain of North Travancore having had preferential treatment at the hands of Government in the matter of appointments.

MEMBER: We have no communal differences in South Travancore.

DEWAN: That is why I said that you are bringing in a new ground of conflict in the matter. We had till now only communal differences. Now you bring local or provincial differences also. I may assure you that the Government have absolutely no intention of bringing in that apple of discord also into the administration.

Your other point is about the reform of the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly. There are other members also speaking about that; and I shall give you a reply tomorrow after hearing them as well.

Your last point is that some opportunity might be given to the members of this Assembly to discuss subjects with the Heads of Departments before those subjects are disposed of by Government. The one wrong assumption in that request is that in the replies given to the members at the meetings of this Assembly it is the notes obtained from the Heads of the Departments that decide the points. What the Heads of Departments—as I explained on a previous day—are asked to do is to give all the facts in relation to the subjects and their full history. Decisions are arrived at by Government and not dictated or advised by the Heads of Departments. I shall consider the feasibility of your suggestion that, in cases of doubt, opportunities might be given to you of meeting the Heads of Departments and discussing with them.

168. Ezhavas and Public Service.

MR. K. SANKARAN (*Nominated*) said that special concessions were shown to the Ezhava community in the nomination of members to the Legislative Council and the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly. Similar concessions should be shown in the matter of representation in public service. Schools remained closed to Ezhavas until a few years ago. When they were thrown open, fees were raised enormously. In consequence, the members of poor communities, like the Ezhavas, had to make great sacrifices to educate their children.

Government would do well to follow the British Indian practice in regard to the representation of the various communities in public service.